

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

By this Amendment, Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite certain aspects of Applicants' invention. Claims 1-4 have also been editorially revised.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Martter (U.S. Patent 2,153,263, "Martter") in view of Hansen (U.S. Patent 5,884,679, "Hansen").

Without acceding to the rejection, independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite certain distinctive features of Applicants' invention with greater particularity, as noted above. As presently amended, Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, that the metal neck component is a one-piece unit including the frusto-conical shoulder portion and the cylindrical portion, and that the sleeve extends over the cylindrical portion of the neck component, the frusto-conical shoulder portion of the neck component and a portion of the side wall.

It is apparent that Martter fails to teach or suggest at least these features. Note, for example, that in contrast with Applicants' invention, Martter's neck component is not a one-piece unit, but it includes two separate parts, an end-piece 21 and a separate neck piece 22. The end-piece 21 in Martter includes an aperture into which the neck piece 22 is inserted for attachment.

Therefore, Martter fails to teach or suggest a one-piece neck component, as currently set-forth in Claim 1.

In addition, as correctly acknowledged by the Office Action, Martter fails to teach or suggest a sleeve that fits over the neck component. The Office Action, however, suggests that Hansen remedies this deficiency in Martter.

It is apparent, however, that Hansen fails to teach or suggest a sleeve which extends over the cylindrical portion of the neck component, the generally frusto-conical shoulder portion of the neck component, and a portion of the side wall, as recited in Claim 1. For example, Hansen's sleeve 46 extends over the tapered neck 22 and stops at the base of the neck 22 and thus, in contrast with Applicant's invention, fails to extend at least over a portion of the side wall of the body of the bottle.

Therefore, Claim 1 and its dependents distinguish patentably from Hartter taken alone or in combination with Hansen.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn and that this application now be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner believe that any further action is necessary to place this application in better form for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (T4515-16174US01) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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